

Figure 4.4 Potential Sources of Bias and Distortion

1. Potential barriers to accurate assessment common to all methods

A. Barriers that can occur within the student

- Language barriers
- Emotional upset
- Poor health
- Physical handicap
- Peer pressure to mislead assessor
- Lack of motivation at time of assessment
- Lack of testwiseness (understanding how to take tests)
- Lack of personal confidence leading to evaluation anxiety

B. Barriers that can occur within the assessment context

- Noise distractions
- Poor lighting
- Discomfort
- Lack of rapport with assessor
- Cultural insensitivity in assessor or assessment
- Lack of proper equipment

C. Barriers that arise from the assessment itself (regardless of method)

- Directions lacking or vague
- Poorly worded questions
- Poor reproduction of test questions
- Missing information

2. Potential barriers to accurate assessment unique to each method

A. Barriers with multiple-choice tests

- Lack of reading skills
- More than one correct response choice
- Incorrect scoring key
- Incorrect bubbling on answer sheet
- Clues to the answer in the item or in other items

Figure 4.4 (Continued)

B. Barriers with extended written response assessments

- Lack of reading or writing skills
- No scoring criteria
- Inappropriate scoring criteria
- Evaluator untrained in applying scoring criteria
- Biased scoring due to stereotyping of respondent
- Insufficient time or patience to read and score carefully
- Students don't know the criteria by which they'll be judged

C. Barriers with performance assessment

- Lack of reading skills
- Inappropriate or nonexistent scoring criteria
- Evaluator untrained in applying scoring criteria
- Bias due to stereotypic thinking
- Insufficient time or patience to observe and score carefully
- Student doesn't feel safe
- Unfocused or unclear tasks
- Tasks that don't elicit the correct performance
- Biased tasks
- Students don't know the criteria by which they'll be judged
- Insufficient sampling

D. Barriers when using personal communication

- Sampling enough performance
- Problems with accurate record keeping

Source: Adapted from *Practice with Student-Involvement Classroom Assessment* (pp. 194–195), by J. A. Arter & K. U. Busick, 2001, Portland, OR: Assessment Training Institute. Copyright © 2006, 2001 Educational Testing Service. Adapted by permission.